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IN MEMORIAM: FRANK SLATER DAGGETT

By H. S. SWARTH

WITH PORTRAIT

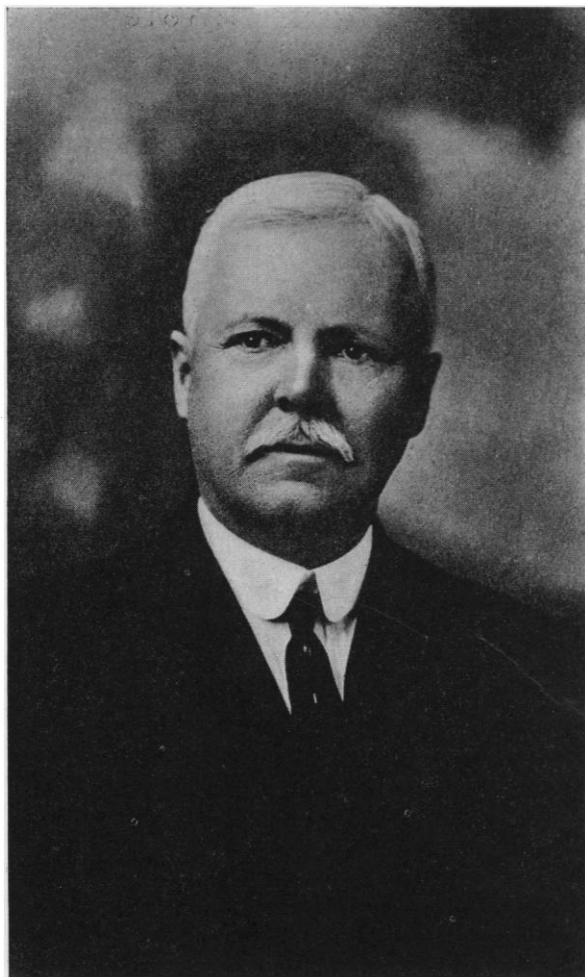
IN THE DEATH of Frank Slater Daggett the Cooper Club has lost an active and energetic member, who for many years had taken a prominent part in the affairs of the Club. His end came April 5, 1920, at Redlands, California, suddenly and without warning, due to a cerebral hemorrhage.

Mr. Daggett was born at Norwalk, Ohio, January 30, 1855. His early manhood was spent at Milwaukee, Wisconsin; on June 5, 1884, at Augusta, Wisconsin, he was married to Lela Axtell. They had one daughter, Ethel Elizabeth, and one son, Axtell, the latter of whom died in his childhood. In 1885 the family moved to Duluth, Minnesota, where Mr. Daggett was engaged in the grain business. While there he was a member of the school board, upon which he was chairman of the finance committee, and he took an active part in the construction of a new high school, which, at the time, was said to be the second finest in the United States. He became greatly interested in photography, by no means as easy for the amateur then as it has since been made, and he owned the first camera to be brought into Duluth.

He was a born collector, and his love for nature and the out-doors turned this bent toward the acquisition of specimens of various forms of animal life. First, in boyhood, a collection of butterflies was begun. Later on, this field was extended to include other insects, and, still later, birds. While at Duluth he made summer trips each year into the Nipigon region, Canada, fishing and collecting, with no company but his Indian guides.

The winter of 1892-93 he and his family spent in Pasadena. The next winter (1893-94) found them at Orlando, Florida. At the latter place Mr. Daggett did a great deal of collecting, many of his specimens going to the Duluth High School. In 1894 the family moved to Pasadena to stay. Just at that time there were a number of individuals in Pasadena and Los Angeles, all interested in birds and gradually getting acquainted with one another, to form the coterie of bird lovers that later developed into the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club. Mostly these were much younger men than Mr. Daggett,

some of them mere boys, in fact, but he found their company congenial—at least in this one phase of their lives—and there is no doubt but that his companionship meant a great deal to these younger associates. With these sympathetic acquaintances, and under other favoring circumstances, he did much ornithological work at this period of his life, and amassed a large collection of southern California birds.



Frank D. Daggett

In 1889 Mr. Daggett became an Associate Member of the American Ornithologists' Union; he was among the first to be advanced to the newly established class of Members, in 1901. Membership in the Cooper Club dates from September 30, 1895. He served as vice-president of the Southern Division during the years 1898, 1899 and 1900, and as president in 1901, 1902, 1903.

At that time the Southern Division held most of its meetings at the residences of various of the members, and a meeting at the Daggett home was always sure to be largely attended. For several consecutive years the "annual meetings" (in December) were held there, and those privileged to be present look back upon those occasions as among the most pleasurable of their Club experiences. The "outing meetings", too, formed a feature of the Southern Division that was a source of much enjoyment to those participating, and Mr. Daggett was always active in the organization and carrying out of these three-day picnics. In 1899, an impending storm deterred most of those who had intended to join in the climb up Mount Wilson, as had been planned, and Mr. Daggett was the only member who showed up. He, with his family and some friends who accompanied them, carried out the "meeting", however, and, later, in a communication to the "Bulletin of the Cooper Ornithological Club" (1899, pp. 119-120), he poked a little good-natured fun at those who failed to appear. His published account of the outing meeting for 1903 gives a very good idea of the nature of these out-door gatherings (1904, pp. 22-23).

In 1904, Mr. Daggett left Pasadena for Chicago, to engage once more in the grain business, on the Board of Trade. His days then, were, of course, extremely busy ones, but he still found rest and relaxation in ornithology, and spent much of his spare time in collecting specimens of small birds in the environs of the city. Not always small birds either, for the present writer, calling at his home one evening, was shown a Whistling Swan that had occupied many hours before the preparation of that greasy specimen was accomplished. The bird had been killed by a hunter near Waukegan, and Mr. Daggett, hearing of the occurrence through some lucky chance the same day, promptly went after the bird and secured it.

In 1910 this period of residence in Chicago ended, and he returned again to southern California. During that year the county of Los Angeles had erected a building in Exposition Park to house the new Museum of History, Science and Art, an institution in which the Cooper Club is interested to the extent of having representation upon the Board of Governors. The building was finished but unoccupied, it contained no exhibits, and as yet no staff appointments had been made. It was a happy circumstance that brought Mr. Daggett to Los Angeles at that time, and it was most fortunate for the young institution that he was induced to accept the directorship, which he did early in 1911. He was a man of marked business ability, well able to assume executive control, this combined with the acquisitive instincts of a collector, the realization of the scientific needs and responsibilities of such an institution, and an artistic sense that was to stand him in good stead in the development of exhibits. Mr. Daggett's acceptance of the directorship entailed a considerable financial sacrifice upon his part. That he took the position was purely through his love for the work; there is no doubt of the intense enjoyment he derived from the building up of the institution and the exhibits it contained. Mr. Daggett remained Director of the Museum of History, Science and Art, to the time of his death. His end came during a brief week-end interval of relaxation, in the midst of the activities of his position.

While the Museum of History, Science and Art covers a wide range of subjects, as indicated by its title, the notable feature of the institution is its collection of fossil animals from Rancho La Brea. It is hard to see how these peculiar fossils could have been better handled, both in the manner of removal and

cleaning, and in the systems of recording and storage. Those selected for exhibition, too, were treated in a way that to the present writer seems well-nigh beyond criticism, considering the unavoidable limitations of exhibition space. Credit for much of the details of this excellent work belongs, of course, to certain of Mr. Daggett's assistants, those in immediate charge of the work, but it was due to the persistent efforts of the Director himself that means became available to enable the collections and exhibits to be handled properly, and as he wished them to be. It is also due to his inflexible attitude in the matter that this priceless accumulation of fossils was kept intact, that invaluable series of specimens ("duplicates", so-called) were not broken up and scattered, in exchange for miscellaneous objects of doubtful value to the institution.

In 1918, Occidental College bestowed upon Mr. Daggett the honorary degree of Doctor of Science, in appreciation of his work at Rancho La Brea. While he did not himself publish anything relating to this deposit, he was untiring in his care that the material should be available for those who were studying it, and that it should be preserved as they would have it done; it was fitting that his services in these regards should be recognized as they were by a university situated in the community where he was employed. His co-operation with those actively engaged in the study of these fossils has been further recognized by the naming of certain species in his honor. *Morphnus daggetti*, a peculiar, long-legged eagle of the Rancho La Brea deposit, was so designated by L. H. Miller in *The Condor* (vol. 17, 1915, pp. 179-181). A puma, *Felis daggetti*, was described by J. C. Merriam (*Univ. Calif. Publ. Geol.*, vol. 10, 1918, pp. 535-537), with the statement that: "This species is named in honor of my friend and colleague, Mr. Frank S. Daggett, Director of the Museum of History, Science and Art, of Los Angeles, whose interest and co-operation in study of the Rancho La Brea collections have contributed largely to the effectiveness of monographic studies on this fauna now in progress."

That Mr. Daggett's work along the lines of ornithology and entomology was mainly as a collector was probably because both studies were followed as a relaxation, a change from the business pursuits with which his days were mostly occupied. His knowledge of both subjects was accurate and comprehensive, but he published little of a technical nature. It is to be noted in his ornithological bibliography that a large proportion of the writings are of the nature of suggestions or criticism, and they are of a character that bespeaks a high degree of acumen and foresight. His communication on the "Importance of Accuracy in Lists" (1899, p. 115) is an expression of deeply felt convictions, and a little later his review of Jones and Dawson's "A Summer Reconnaissance in the West" (1901, pp. 53-54) is a re-iteration of the same theme. There is no doubt that Mr. Daggett's repeated insistence on the need of care and accuracy in ornithological work had a marked effect, and a very wholesome one, upon his younger associates, who were at that time "discovering" many novelties.

His communication "Concerning the Active Membership of the A. O. U." (1900, pp. 68-69), was not a criticism of carping and pointless character, such as had been directed toward that organization from other quarters, but a reasonable presentation of facts, suggesting desirable changes and in a manner free from offense. It is noteworthy that the publication of these views foreshadowed the radical changes made in the by-laws of the American Ornitholo-

gists' Union a year or so later. Mr. Daggett's "Suggestion for forming Club chapters" (1901, p. 109) outlined a scheme that was later adopted by the Cooper Club, and very successfully. Another published letter of his (1911, p. 78) urging expansion of the A. O. U. *Check-List* to include all of North America south to the Isthmus of Panama, we may assume to be again a correct insight into the trend of future events.

There has been one bird subspecies named for Mr. Daggett, *Sphyrapicus varius daggetti*, described by Grinnell (Condor, vol. 3, 1901, p. 12). Grinnell and Daggett, in collaboration, described the song sparrow of Coronados Islands, *Melospiza coronatorum* (Auk, vol. 20, 1903, p. 34).

Mr. Daggett was ingenious and resourceful. His ingenuity found expression in such things as the modifications he introduced into the accepted mode of preparing bird skins, in the types of cases he manufactured for the storage of his specimens, and in many details in the installation of exhibits during the first year or two of the Museum of History, Science and Art, when there was much to be done with but little help. His resourcefulness in dealing with people was a trait that was of great value in his Museum work, too, for with a governing board composed of nine individuals, and with a county board of supervisors in addition to be considered, there were bound to be clashing interests that could not be reconciled. It speaks well of the Director of the Museum that he could have pursued his course and, in the main, attained his objects, and still retain the approbation and support of men whose ideas he often felt compelled to oppose.

The writer recalls resourcefulness of another sort in an incident, the outcome of which caused Mr. Daggett the keenest satisfaction. A blackguardly sheriff's officer of some sort, working in connivance with a corrupt justice of the peace (a combination of a kind that at that period flourished in Chicago), arrested him and a companion on the charge of breaking the law in shooting birds near one of the villages along the drainage canal, southwest of the city. Bail was placed at twenty dollars each, and the trial set some days ahead, the assumption being, of course, that men of such obviously prosperous appearance as the two prisoners would not appear at the time, forfeiting their bail as the simplest way out of the difficulty. This, however, did not appeal to Mr. Daggett in the least, and he was unkind enough to return to the city at once and institute certain inquiries. The result of his discoveries was that the next morning the officer who arrested him was himself in the county jail, on charge of running a "blind pig", and before the day was over he was, in a rather dazed state of mind, beginning to serve a jail sentence for the offense. At the time set for Mr. Daggett's trial, he and his companion appeared, serene and untroubled, before a judge who was obviously disturbed, though unable to say much; the complaining witness was not on hand. The bail money was returned, with what grace the court could muster, and the incident was closed—for all but the luckless individual who had started the trouble.

Mr. Daggett's collection of bird skins numbered 8009 specimens at the time of his death. His collection of Coleoptera was also a large one. A large proportion, both of birds and beetles, was collected by himself, notably from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Florida and southern California. He had besides a quantity of material, both ornithological and entomological, from Arizona. Bird skins were prepared by a method of his own devising, and his specimens

were of excellent appearance and remarkably durable in construction. Both birds and beetles were housed in cases that he himself planned and built, cases that excellently served his purpose and that were neat and pleasing in appearance.

Regarding his entomological work, the following information has been received from Prof. H. C. Fall, the accomplished coleopterist: "Mr. Daggett was an enthusiastic and observing collector, but his contributions to entomological literature are, so far as I know, confined to two or three half-page notes and two short articles (two or three pages each) on collecting experiences around Duluth and in the wilderness to the north of that city. His observations are about equally divided among butterflies, grasshoppers and beetles. I think all the articles were published in 'Entomological News', 1892-1895. . . . I once named an *Acmaeodera* in his honor. I do not know of any other species named for him, but there might be, outside the limits of the Coleoptera. His beetle collection probably numbered 2000 species, taken mostly around Duluth and in California."

Next to the collections of birds and insects, his library commanded his interest and attention. It includes, besides his careful selection of bound volumes, a collection of unbound separata that grew to such size as to be fairly crowded out of his home and necessarily removed to a room in the Museum.

During the years he spent in Chicago, Mr. Daggett was a familiar figure in the second-hand book stores of the city. Any leisure time on his way to or from his office was apt to be spent in these places, and many were the treasures he unearthed. An especially curious find made at that time, a unique copy of Petiver's "Gazophylacium Naturae et Artis" (London, 1702-1709) is described by him in the Auk (1907, pp. 448-449).

The appended bibliography contains such of Mr. Daggett's writings, outside of entomology, as the present author has been able to find, but it may well be that some items are overlooked.

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